

The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

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[For Gratuitous Circulation.]

THE Rev. J. C. Street will be glad to acknowledge receipt of contributions in aid of the publication and gratuitous circulation of the *Chronicle and Index*.

On Sunday, July 5th, a very successful floral service was held at the Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, which was beautifully and tastefully decorated with plants, flowers, and ferns. The children of the Sunday School had each a bouquet in their hands, and sang four hymns for the occasion. The Rev. J. C. Street opened the service by reading the first lesson and two first hymns and offering prayer. The Rev. W. Reynolds, B.A., the minister, read the second lesson, the remaining two hymns, and also offered prayer. This rev. gentleman also delivered the sermon or address. He commenced by quoting two stanzas from Longfellow's poem, and then proceeded to call attention to the structure, growth, and reproduction of flowering plants; of the root absorbing mineralised water which met the carbonic acid gases in the leaves, and there, under the influence of the sunshine, becoming starch and proceeding to nourish the whole tree or plant. He then illustrated the cellular growth of the plant by exhibiting a piece of sponge and forming loops by a blade of grass. After mentioning the component parts of the viscid granular substance in the cells he called attention to the need of a God to combine these, so that life should ensue. Man could combine them, but could not endow them with or evolve life from them. The rev. gentleman next explained the various parts of the flower and their respective uses, illustrating his address by a wild rose and a garden rose. He next pointed to the development of the garden rose from

the wild rose, and the garden lily from the wild lily, after which he applied his subject to the Sunday School and Christian Church, which were to do for children and adults just what cultivation did for the wild flower, make their lives pure as the lily and beautiful as the rose. A satisfactory collection was then taken up, and the congregation, which overcrowded the church, vestibule, and vestry, then dispersed.

ONE of our leading citizens, who is at present both the Mayor of the Town and the Chairman of the Harbour Board, has had the honour of a Baronetcy conferred upon him by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Sir Edward Harland has won a place into the very front rank of the men of enterprise of the day. As a shipbuilder he ranks among the most successful, and as a man of commercial ability and honor his name stands deservedly high. He is a prominent Unitarian and attends the First Congregation, Belfast. The unflinching avowal of his Unitarianism has never stood in the way of his advancement. Sir E. J. Harland is a Conservative in politics.

THE Missionary Services have been continued throughout the past month at Hopeton Street. The Rev. J. C. Street has been the preacher, the attendances have been encouraging, and more people from the immediate neighbourhood have been present. It is intended to carry on these services for a little while longer.

THE annual summer excursion of the members of the Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association took place on Tuesday, July 21st. The place chosen was Crawfordsburn.

The day was one of the finest of the summer, and the happy group of pleasure-seekers greatly enjoyed their trip. A saloon first-class carriage had been secured for the party, who arrived at Clandeboyne in capital spirits about 4 p.m. They went direct to the seashore, and enjoyed the ramble by the sands and rocks. Then they lingered among the mazy pathways of the lovely burn, and feasted their eyes upon the natural beauties which abound there. After awhile all adjourned to the pretty village hotel, where an ample meal awaited them, to which they did full justice. After tea, some of the party rambled about the pretty garden or formed happy groups in the leafy arbours, while others enjoyed a sprightly dance. At one portion of the day's proceedings the President, the Rev. J. C. Street, gave an account of the success of the Barrington Political Economy Class, and reported the names of the four prize-winners. After an evening of full enjoyment the party returned to Belfast about eleven o'clock.

AFTER prolonged services as Professor and Principal of Manchester New College, Dr. Martineau, at the ripe age of eighty years, but with powers unabated, and mental vision undimmed, has retired from his duties in connection with that institution. His career has been of the most brilliant character, and though as tutor in a small and comparatively unknown Academy, he had few chances of being known in the great world of letters and thought, he, by the splendour of his gifts and the greatness of his genius, rose to the very front rank of the world's philosophers, and commanded a hearing and a following only given to the most illustrious of any generation. The calm eventide of his life is being given to the revision and publication of the substance of his teachings, and there is no doubt that his great fame will extend, and his followers multiply when they can have before their eyes what has hitherto been only granted to the select few. Into his retirement he carries with him the love and veneration of thousands, and he is privileged to know that his teachings have furnished a steady light to multitudes of thinkers who had been groping on their way.

SUNDAY SCHOOL excursions and entertainments have followed each other swiftly during the sunny days of the past month. We hear of the schools of Comber, Killinchy, Down, Hopeton Street, Stanhope Street, Moneyrea and Mountpottinger, seeking country air and scenes, and teachers and friends vying with one another in securing a happy time for the children. No doubt many other schools about which we have no definite information have also been busily occupied in festive scenes. The happy association of scholars and teachers in this pleasant manner will yield results for good in the growth of mutual love and good will.

It is pleasant to hear of the continued and steady progress of the interesting cause established by the Rev. C. J. Street at Kilbarchan, and now ministered to by the Rev. J. E. Stronge. Mr. Stronge has consolidated the congregation, and built it up into permanency. The present place of meeting is quite unequal to the size and growing importance of the congregation, and steps will shortly have to be taken to obtain better and larger accommodation. We understand that among the people themselves an effort is being made to commence a building fund, and it is to be hoped that if they make an appeal to the sympathies and for the support of the Unitarian public the response will be of a most prompt and generous character.

THE Missionary Conference which was held in Manchester, on Thursday, July 2nd, was well attended, and had a very interesting session. The opening address of the President, Rev. R. Pilcher, was of a helpful and stimulating character, and the Paper of Rev. Brooke Herford, entitled "In the name of Christ," led to a very fruitful expression of opinion on the part of many members of the Conference. The Rev. J. C. Street led the discussion, and said that the Paper of Mr. Herford, though containing phraseology which some of our thinkers would not be inclined to use, was really in full accord with the thoroughly human and natural presentation of the character and work of

Jesus which was most generally accepted by all the prominent preachers of Unitarianism in Great Britain. This opinion seemed generally shared by the members of the Conference. The social meeting at the close of the day's proceedings was of a very enjoyable character. The Rev. J. McDowell, of Pendleton, was elected President for the ensuing year. The following was the report presented to the Conference:—

In presenting the Report of another year's work, it is with the liveliest satisfaction your Committee feel able to state that the missionary operations of the Conference have been attended with most gratifying success, and that the effort to establish Unitarianism in Douglas and Carlisle has realised the best hopes of those who have taken part in it. Two new congregations have been surely established, each undertaking at an early period in its history the management of its own affairs; one of them being already in possession of a handsome church, and the other looking forward to the laying of its foundation stone at no distant day.

For some time the friends at Douglas had been desirous of making arrangements which would relieve the Conference of further responsibility for the carrying on of the religious services, and it is a source of great satisfaction that their desires are at length attained, and that they have secured outside assistance which enables them to have the benefit of the services of a settled minister. The Rev. T. Leyland, Vice-President of the Conference, received a cordial and unanimous invitation to become the first minister of the church. He commenced his duties on the first Sunday of the present year, and under his pastorate the congregation is steadily growing in numbers and strength. It is to be regretted that the whole of the amount required for the purchase of the new chapel has not been raised, but it is hoped the sum still wanted may soon be received, and the congregation relieved of a debt which seriously affects its growth and prosperity.

The friends at Carlisle have from the first laboured steadfastly to advance their cause, and it redounds to their honour that in the

short space of a year and a half they have succeeded in gaining a position which enables them to dispense with the help rendered by the Conference, and to secure the services of a settled minister. The gentleman who was unanimously chosen to be the first pastor of this earnest band of Unitarians is the Rev. W. H. Lambelle, a member of the Conference. He commenced his ministry on the second Sunday in April, and there is every reason to hope that a strong and vigorous congregation will be gathered together in this border city.

At the social meetings held to welcome the new ministers at Douglas and Carlisle, the Secretary attended as a deputation from the Conference.

To enable them to carry on the work at these two places in a proper and adequate manner, your Committee decided to start a Special Missionary Fund, and made an earnest appeal for contributions. To this appeal some few members of the Conference responded, and very helpful donations were received from several ladies and gentlemen, among whom are to be specially mentioned Miss Sharpe, Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hopgood, and Rev. W. M. Ainsworth; and it is an encouraging fact that the amount raised for missionary purposes in the past year is the largest since the Conference took up active missionary work. The members are urgently asked to assist the Committee in securing help for the special fund, especially in the shape of annual subscriptions.

As will be seen from the Treasurer's Financial Statement the Committee are under great obligation to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association for grants in aid of the missionary efforts at Douglas and Carlisle. These grants, considerably augmented, will be continued to the congregations there.

As soon as the Committee were relieved of the charge of the Douglas and Carlisle missions they turned their attention to the question of breaking new ground in some other suitable place. Llandudno was suggested to them as a good field, and the Rev. J. Freeston was appointed to visit the place to make needful inquiries. His report will be laid before the annual meeting.

At the meeting of the National Conference, at Birmingham, the Missionary Conference was represented by the President and the Treasurer.

From the experience of the last two years the Committee do not consider it advisable to arrange for another public missionary meeting on the evening of the Annual Conference, and, therefore, revert to the old plan of having a brief social meeting after the tea. They trust this arrangement will meet with the approval of the members.

The Committee have had under very careful consideration the question of the most convenient time for holding the Annual Meeting, and the members' annual subscriptions and travelling expenses. They would suggest that the Annual Meeting should be held in January, and that there be a reduction in the members' subscription and allowance made for travelling expenses.

The present number of members is 71.

The following changes have taken place in the settlement of ministers who are members of the Conference:—Rev. T. Leyland has removed from Burnley to Douglas, Rev. R. C. Smith from Stanington to Buxton, Rev. A. Lancaster from Belfast to Killinchy, Rev. H. Rylett from Moneyrea to Maidstone, Rev. W. H. Lambelle from South Shields to Carlisle, Rev. F. W. Walters from Glasgow to Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Rev. J. G. Slater from Middleton to Holbeck; Rev. J. Ruddle has removed from Pudsey; and Rev. W. Fielding has settled at Ballyclare, Rev. J. E. Stronge at Paisley, and Rev. J. Bibby at Ballee.

ONE of the most persuasive arguments for a future state rests on the belief that, although by the necessity of things our outward and temporal welfare must be regulated by our outward actions, there must yet needs come a juster and more appropriate sentence hereafter, in which our intentions will be considered, and our happiness and misery made to accord with the grounds of our actions. Our fellow-creatures can only judge what we are by what we do; but in the eyes of our Maker what we do is of no worth, except as it flows from what

we are. Though the fig-tree should produce no visible fruit; yet if the living sap is in it, and if it has struggled to put forth buds and blossoms which have been prevented from maturing by inevitable contingencies or untimely frosts, the virtuous sap will be accounted as fruit; and the curse of barrenness will light on many a tree from the boughs of which hundreds have been satisfied, because the omniscient judge knows that the fruits were threaded to the boughs artificially by the outward working of base fear and selfish hopes.—*Coleridge*.

A THOUGHT.

Yon sail on the horizon's verge
Doth like a wandering spirit seem,—
A shadow in a sea of light—
The passing of a dream.

A moment more and it is gone!
We know now how—we know not where;
It came—an instant stay'd—and then
It vanish'd into air.

Such are we all: we sail awhile
In joy, on life's fair summer sea;
A moment—and our bark is gone
Into eternity.

—*Robert Nicoll*.

It is not always easy to recall the precise moment when one passes from belief into open denial of theological creeds. But an old friend, who stands high in the esteem of all who knew him as a man of undoubted integrity, explained the other day how it happens that he never goes to church. This is the way he put the story:

"When I was a youngster, I was induced by some one to go to Sunday School. They gave me a chapter in the Catechism to learn; and, though I couldn't understand much of it, I had a good memory, and learned it so I could repeat it like a parrot. There was one passage, however, that I could understand. I had had no religious instruction, and came to it unbiased by any early training. The question was, 'Doth eternal sin wholly defile you, and is it sufficient to send you to hell, though you commit no other sin?' The answer in the

book was 'Yes.' I read it over once or twice, and thought it was a typographical error. So I took my penknife and carefully cut out the word, 'Yes,' and wrote beside the opening, in my unformed hand, the shorter and to me more correct word, 'No.' That question happened to come to me, and I boldly answered, 'No.'

"'What,' said the teacher, 'No? You mean "Yes."'"

"'It is "no" in my book,' I replied.

"'Impossible! Let me look at it.'

"'The printer made a mistake, and I fixed it,' I replied without a tremor.

"He took the book in his hand, glanced at it in horror, dropped it instantaneously, and in the twinkling of an eye had me by the collar. To say that I was astounded slightly expresses my feelings. About seven times he jerked me back and forth in a perfect fury. When he let go, I walked out of the church, and have never been to church since."

It is not strange that this gentleman acquired a dislike to catechisms, creeds, and those who expound them. If the truth could be known, there are thousands who are alienated from the church to-day simply by the strong dislike they imbibed in early years for the harsh and unnatural dogmas of Calvinism. It is easy to see that the boy had more of a religious spirit than his teacher, and that his religion was founded on better ethical principles. This gentleman is one of the most prominent and active philanthropists in the West; and it seems a pity to those who know him that he should have been estranged from religious institutions through the use of a catechism which is still extant, and which is in many respects a libel upon God and humanity. The Westminster and Heidelberg catechisms were constructed for the pious purpose of conserving the interests of religion. They have done much, however, to hinder its development and progress. The inevitable reaction from this form of teaching is one that the framers did not count upon. Originally, they may have been effective sectarian weapons; but the recoil from these doctrinal blunderbuses is so great as to render it exceedingly uncomfortable for some who use them.—*Christian Register.*

TO MY COUNTRYMEN.

In this the Nineteenth Century
Since Purity Divine
Dwelt among erring mortals
Within a human shrine,
In so-called Christian England
Are done such deeds of shame,
We blush to think upon them,
And dare not speak their name.

Our country's free-born daughters
Like slaves are bought and sold,
Victims for Peers and Princes,
With their accursèd gold;
Our womanhood degraded,
By foulest evil wrought,
The virtue of our girlhood
Counted a thing of nought.

When Sextus wronged Lucretia,
Blighting her life and home,
It cost the haughty Tarquins
The sovereignty of Rome;
But when our hapless daughters
By Prince and Peer undone,
Cry to the Law for Justice,
God help them! there is none.

Lift up your voice to heaven,
Mothers, on bended knee,
Rise up in wrath, ye fathers,
And say, "This shall not be;"
Men that *are* men, look upward
For courage, strength, and might,
Your watchword, "No surrender,"
No quarter in this fight!

Manhood of Christian England!
In righteousness arise,
Since womanhood is lovely
And precious in your eyes;
Your sisters' dauntless champions,
True to your sacred trust,
Speak, as in tones of thunder,
To the foul slaves of lust.

Tell them their deeds of darkness
Are coming to the light,
That God, their Judge, is with you
In this most holy fight;
That your stern resolution
No power on earth can shake,
That neither Peers nor Princes
Unscathed the Law shall break.

Ye have the vote—now use it;
The battle is at hand;
For pure and noble womanhood
Make a determined stand;
Choose for our new Law-makers
Men who themselves are pure,
So will ye do your duty,
And victory be sure. E. B. P.

From "The Christian."

We venture to offer the following extracts from the Farewell Sermon delivered by Rev. Frank Walters, in St. Vincent Street Unitarian Church, Glasgow, on Sunday morning, 29th March, 1885, from the text—

"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak."—II. Cor. iv. 13.

If I were to characterise my teaching in a few words, I should call it HUMANITARIAN, THEISTIC, and CHRISTIAN. Man, God, and Christ,—how often have I spoken those words! And remembering those great words, you can never forget the leading thoughts of my ministry.

I.

I have spoken to you of the greatness of man. In the fullness of their meaning, I have accepted the words of the Hebrew Psalmist:—"Thou hast made man only a little lower than thyself, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour;" while I have found the sublimest claim of the human soul in the words of Jesus:—"I and my father are one." Even in the sins, and struggles, and sufferings of man we have found the evidence of a latent greatness, the working of a divine purpose, and the prophecy of a perfect blessedness. Human nature the highest revelation of God, human life the perennial miracle of creative power, human destiny stretching into a path of endless progress,—these have been the themes of numerous sermons.

And I have not merely taught you the greatness of humanity as a wonderful abstraction. I have not forgotten that humanity has no existence apart from men, and women, and children. Christ was the great prophet of the religion of humanity, because he discovered the needs of every suffering, sorrowing creature who came into his presence. And remembering the dealings of Christ with individual souls, I have tried to make you feel that every life has a sacredness of its own, and sustains a unique relationship to the Father of spirits. The humblest and most commonplace life has its divine meaning, and may become the unfolding of a providential discipline. Religion is the realization of this dignity and power of

our life, the conviction of its infinite value and immortal issues.

And at this point I have discovered the value of the Bible, and been able to rescue this venerable book from the distortions of a servile superstition, and from the contempt of a crude iconoclasm. I have treated the Bible as the record of human thought and feeling, describing for us the joys and sorrows of the soul in its search for God. Regarding the Bible thus, I have not been eager to meddle with curious questions of Biblical criticism. When the soul speaks, and thrills us with its cry, names and times and places seem almost things indifferent. So long as the words express the passions and prayers of the human heart, I am not anxious to decide the questions of date and authorship. To me the human interest has always been supreme above the literary criticism. It is my faith in man which gives such living value to these ancient scriptures.

II.

Above all does the religion of humanity rise into a splendid theism, when in man's search for God we discover God's continual revelation of himself to man. That is what I mean by "rationalism." By rationalism I mean a faith which finds in the constitution of human nature the deepest grounds of religion—a faith which discovers in the laws of reason and the authority of conscience sure and certain evidence of a divine mind and an eternal righteousness. Instead of preaching sermons to prove the existence of God by outward evidences and external authorities, I have rather tried to awaken those faculties by which alone you can discern the living God of infinite purity, and changeless truth, and boundless love. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Only the divine soul can know the divine spirit; only by aspiration after holiness can we gain faith in the infinite perfection. There, and there alone, in the depths of our own nature, and in the experience of our own life, can we reach a basis of faith unshaken by any attacks of material science or speculative doubt. However great the terrors of nature and the mysteries of providence, yet we abide in the unchanging faith of that living God who has thrilled us by His presence in every noble thought, and pure emotion, and kindling aspiration. God is not merely a transcendent ideal which we have created by our imagination and projected by our thought; God is the eternal

Being in whom we find the origin, the purpose, and the destiny of our earthly existence. It is a superficial sarcasm which says that man has made God in his own image and likeness. The deepest religious consciousness testifies that it is we who are found of God.

'Tis rather God who seeks for us,
Than we who seek for him.

It is not so much that we have made the discovery of God; it is God who has found us, touched us by his hand, encompassed us by his presence, and quickened us by his spirit.

III.

And believing in Man and God, and in the living relationship of every soul to the Father of spirits, how can I help a passionate loyalty to that divine man in whom the human and divine seem blended into the beauty of a perfect life. With no half-hearted hesitation, but with all the eagerness of my mind, and the devotion of my soul, do I glory to call myself by the name of Christ. I look to Christ, not as a mechanical example to be copied, but as a living ideal to be revered and loved. That purity of heart whereby Christ rose into the vision of divine Fatherhood, that perfect peace which he gained by a complete surrender to the divine will, that quenchless love whereby he laid down his life in sublime self-sacrifice,—these appear to us as the highest attainments of manhood, and also as the fullest revelations of the secrets of Godhead. Christ becomes to us the living symbol of our finest faith and our loftiest hope. Our souls respond to his ringing words, when he says:—"I am the way, the truth, and the life. He that has seen me, has seen the Father. Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled; in my Father's house are many mansions." Yes! from our many teachers, we come back to Christ, and say:—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Gather up these elements of faith. In Man we find the ceaseless aspiration after the higher and better. In God we find the infinite perfection towards which men seek to rise. In Christ we find the historical realization of the union of filial humanity and paternal deity, the complete atonement of the human will to the divine will. Thus all my teaching seems to have been an interpretation of the wealth of meaning contained in those words, MAN, GOD, and CHRIST; while in the thought of IMMORTALITY I have shown that every line of spiritual evidence points to a life of endless progress beyond the shadow which we call death.

These have been my themes, themes I acknowledge all too wonderful for my feeble

powers and my stammering lips. To expound these doctrines of spiritual religion, I have drawn in my energies from other attractive paths of usefulness; I have economised my hours; I have denied myself many enticing pleasures; I have rigidly governed my public and private life so as to avoid interruption to a work so difficult and a responsibility so great. I have tried to sacrifice everything that hindered me from becoming a faithful messenger of divine truth. I have given myself to you. No one knows better than I do, how poor that gift has been. But such as it is, I have given it without reserve. I have held back nothing. I might have given other things. I might have given my time in more frequent visitation at your houses; I might have given you my ambition in works of public enterprise; I might have given you my literary tastes and philosophic studies in elaborate essays and popular lectures. At this hour I can think of many things I have not given, of many things I have not done. But, during the last eight years, I have, in the deepest sense, laid down my life for you. I have given you my most secret thoughts; I have unburdened my soul; I have told you of my doubts and joys, my temptations and triumphs, my deepest agony and my loftiest faith. And now it is over. For the last time I stand, as your minister, on this sacred spot, within this dear familiar church, to look into your faces as my people;—my people, whom I have loved and served, among whom I have passed through much suffering,—suffering in which I have been sustained by your friendship, your confidence, and your loyalty. To-day, you and I close another chapter of our religious history; and what the future for you and me may be, we cannot tell. But there is ONE who knows. And my prayer is, that the coming pages of our history may record a deeper inspiration of holiness and a clearer vision of truth. So far as the past is concerned we write the solemn words,—*The end*. But with God there is no end; and whatever work, even in weakness, we have wrought in God, partakes of his eternity and can have no end. For this church, which I love so deeply,—and for my own ministry, to which I shall devote myself while life and strength shall last,—for you and me, beloved, I implore the guidance and the blessing of that eternal Father, in whom, though separated, we are one, and whose eternal home lies beyond the changes of earth and the shadows of death.

The above extracts give a fair presentation of the scope and spirit of Mr. Walters' ministry in Glasgow, and indicate what his ministry is likely to be in Newcastle-on-Tyne. He is a man who cannot but exercise a large and growing influence upon all those among whom he lives and ministers.

THE BELFAST UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

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